



DELAINE EASTIN  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF  
EDUCATION

721 Capitol Mall

P. O. Box 944272

Sacramento, CA

94244-2720

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To: District and County Superintendents  
Attention: Directors of Testing  
Directors of Curriculum  
Directors of Special Education  
Bilingual Coordinators

From: Phil Spears, Director  
Standards and Assessment Division  
California Department of Education

Subject: **Update on Standards and Assessment--July 2000**

State, county, district, and school level STAR 2000 results for all students were posted on the Internet on July 17 as required by statute. For your review, we have included updated information related to the High School Exit Examination (HSEE); Physical Fitness testing required for grades 5, 7, and 9; the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program; and California's long term plan for testing, recently approved by the State Board of Education (SBE).

### **High School Exit Examination**

#### **HumRRO Evaluation Report**

The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) presented the first year evaluation of the HSEE to the SBE on July 12. After a lengthy discussion of the findings and recommendations from the evaluation, the SBE determined that development and implementation of the HSEE should move forward as scheduled with the first test spring 2001 for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students (optional).

#### **Proposed HSEE Public Communication Campaign**

A proposed public communication campaign has been developed to support the implementation of the HSEE. Identified activities address information needs of education's key stakeholders – teachers, administrators, parents, students, school board members, other elected officials, and business leaders. Focus groups of these stakeholders are meeting during the summer to provide input for development and implementation of the HSEE. In addition to a statewide information campaign, the plan features assistance materials and staff training for districts and schools, with teacher and student guides, sample test questions, guidelines for working with students with special needs, and more. This campaign will begin as soon as the SBE approves the HSEE test this fall.

### **HSEE Fall Field Test**

In July, AIR, the test developer for HSEE, convened review panels to examine fall field test items for both mathematics and English language arts. The fall field test will occur between October 2 and 13 and will provide the necessary data to establish performance levels for a passing score and providing items for future tests forms.

### **Physical Fitness Testing**

#### **Testing and Reporting Required in 2000-01**

Districts that did not send 1998-99 physical fitness results to the California Department of Education were sent a letter in June reminding them that participation is required and that all districts must report results as requested. Advance information was sent in early June to each county and district superintendent (attention: directors of curriculum, directors of evaluation, and test coordinators). Copies of the memo can be obtained on the Standards and Assessment Division web site at [www.cde.ca.gov/statetests](http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests) or by contacting the division office at (916) 657-3011. A follow up memo will be sent in September.

### **Standardized Testing and Reporting Program (STAR) 2000**

#### **Internet Posting**

State, county, district, and school level STAR 2000 Stanford 9 and California Standards Test results for all students were posted on the Internet on July 17. Results for the SABE/2 for all students as well as for required subgroups (i.e., males/females, economically disadvantaged/not economically disadvantaged, etc.) were also posted on July 17. Subgroup results for the Stanford 9 and California Standards Tests will be posted in mid-August. Districts are reminded that parents/guardians should receive the STAR Parent Reports and SABE/2 Home Reports within 20 days of their arrival in the district.

#### **Participation Data and Governor's Awards Programs**

At its July meeting, the SBE took action to establish the minimum percentage of students participating in STAR (Stanford 9 and California Standards Tests) in order for a school to be eligible for an award under the Governor's Awards programs. Elementary and middle schools that met growth targets must have tested at least 95% of students in order to be eligible to receive an award. High schools must have tested at least 90% of their students to be eligible. Schools should be aware that the enrollment data reported on the Internet are not used in calculating participation rates. Information about eligibility for rewards, including calculation of percentage of students tested, may be obtained from the California Department of Education Awards and Evaluation Unit, (916) 657-2881.

#### **Apportionments and Payments to the Publisher**

All districts should have returned their STAR 2000 Apportionment Information Reports and related information by July 14. Each district that used pre-identification of answer documents, and/or ordered optional services or reports, is responsible for paying the publisher the amount specified for pre-identification and/or the amount of any separate agreement. Stanford 9 pre-identification is charged at \$.32 per student; SABE/2 pre-identification is \$.48 per student for grades 2 and 3, \$.24 per student for grades 4 through 11.

## **STAR 2001**

### **Spring 2001 Testing Window**

The SBE voted to establish a STAR testing window based on instructional time in an effort to achieve comparability among schools on the California Standards Tests. Specifically, all schools are to administer the Stanford 9 and the California Standards Tests within a window that is ten school days on either side of the day on which 75% of the instructional days are completed. For a traditional 180 day calendar, 75% of instructional days occurs on day 135. The window would be from the 125<sup>th</sup> through the 145<sup>th</sup> days of instruction. Makeup testing should occur within five school days following the completion of testing. Districts with multiple calendars should apply the "75% of instructional days" to each calendar track in order to establish the testing window for each track. Legislation has been proposed to accommodate districts with non-traditional calendars where 75% of instructional days falls after the current May 15 deadline. A detailed description of the STAR 2001 testing calendar will be posted on the Internet once all relevant decisions have been made.

### **STAR 2001 Science Tests at Grades 9 through 11**

In addition to California Standards tests for biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science four coordinated/integrated science tests will be available for students enrolled in standards-based classes, when the grades 9 through 11 California Science Standards Tests are administered in spring 2001. These tests will be in four configurations, covering Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry (EBC); Earth Science, Biology, Physics (EBP); Earth Science, Chemistry, Physics (ECP); and Biology, Chemistry, Physics (BCP). Students enrolled in integrated science courses should take the test that best matches the content of their course. Further information about the tests' content will be forthcoming.

### **Test Preparation**

As you are aware, test preparation has become a serious issue across our state. In an effort to help schools know what is acceptable, a guide outlining appropriate test preparation is under development. Until the guide is available, districts are reminded that California statute prohibits the use of specific programs of test preparation for students. The California Code of Regulations, Title 5, prohibits the use of alternate or parallel forms of a test with students. Reports of inappropriate test preparation activities, including but not limited to the use of alternate forms of the Stanford 9, Form T, may be investigated where unusual test results are noted.

### **English Language Development (ELD) Assessment**

The ELD assessment, now being developed, is being structured to identify five levels of development: Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, and Advanced. The 2000-01 Budget Bill changes existing law to significantly simplify test administration. Districts now will be required to administer the test upon initial enrollment and during one period annually set by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the SBE. Districts will no longer be required to give the test annually on the anniversary of each student's initial test administration.

### **Long Term Testing Plan**

The SBE approved a long term plan for the state testing program, based on six principles that will guide test development and lead to a more coordinated and efficient assessment system.

Those principles are:

- All state tests will conform to high technical standards
- State tests will focus instruction on mastery of state content standards
- The STAR standards tests will be the “core” of the state testing system
- STAR standards tests will be the “core” of the state’s accountability system
- A nationally norm-referenced test will provide national comparisons of student achievement
- STAR tests will be integrated with other state tests into a coherent system of assessment

The plan envisions a “completed” state assessment system by 2002-03 and describes a step-by-step timeline for the development of the system. As implementation of the plan unfolds, there likely will be issues that could impact this ambitious timeline. Despite these anticipated challenges, the plan provides a good road map for the continued improvement of the state’s assessment system. More details about the plan will be sent to districts this fall when development and implementation activities and timelines are completed.

### **The Governor’s Scholars Program**

The Legislature has funded \$118 million for the Governor’s Scholars Program. This program will award \$1,000 each to students for high achievement on the STAR tests and \$2,500 each to students for performance in science and math on Advanced Placement tests or Golden State Exams. The process, eligibility criteria, and timeline for these scholarship awards will be distributed to districts in a separate memo after all required legislation has been passed and signed into law.

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For questions or further information about standards and assessment, contact the Standards and Assessment Division: phone: (916) 657-3011; fax (916) 657-4964; e-mail: [star@cde.ca.gov](mailto:star@cde.ca.gov); or visit our web site at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov) and click on Standards and Assessment. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

<p><b>Reminder:</b> The Update on Standards and Assessment – June 2000 addressed a number of important topics related to STAR. These included: performance levels for STAR; STAR 2001 direct writing tests at grades 4 and 7, mathematics tests at grades 8 through 11, history/social science and science tests at grades 9 through 11; and fall field testing. All updates are posted on the web site at <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/misc/updates.html">www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/misc/updates.html</a>. You are encouraged to review this information again.</p>
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